

## Visiting the Intensive Care Unit (ICU)

Once your family member has been admitted to the intensive care unit, our staff will need time with your family member to provide care.

The nurse will call you in as soon as possible. Please do not eat or use cell phones and electronic equipment in the ICU. Your patience and understanding are greatly appreciated.

Doctors, nurses, therapists, social workers, chaplains, dietitians and technicians are all part of the team caring for the patient.

*The ICU team works together to care for the patient and help family members understand what is happening.*

### **You are part of our team. You can help.**

- Stop at the nurses' station before entering an ICU room.
- When not at the bedside, please return to the waiting area.
- Send cards, pictures and notes.
- Have one family member be the spokesperson to call or speak on behalf of the family.
- Take valuables home that belong to your family member.

### **Your smile, reassuring voice and warm touch are important.**

- Please do not visit when you are ill or visibly upset.
- Ask the nurse before bringing children to visit.

### **Helping patients breathe**

- Oxygen may be given in many different ways to help patients breathe.
- A ventilator may be needed to help the patient breathe. This is connected to a tube that is placed in the windpipe (trachea). The patient will not be able to talk with the tube in place because it passes the voice box.

## Each patient has special monitoring needs.

The numbers and waves on the monitor are different for each patient and can change for many reasons. The monitor may show the following.

- **ECG** – electrical activity of the heart and heart rate
- **ABP/NBP** – blood pressure readings
- **PAP, CVP** – pressures inside the heart
- **Resp** – breathing rate
- **SvO2** – oxygen levels in the blood

## Heart Monitoring

- A patient may have patches (electrodes) on the chest so we can monitor the heart. The patient's heart activity is observed by staff on monitors at the nursing desk and in the ICU room. On these monitors, you may see many lines or even a "straight line." This does not always mean there is a problem.

## Emergency

- In case of an emergency in the ICU, you may be asked to leave the ICU area quickly for the safety of all patients. Please keep the halls and doorways clear.

## Sights and Sounds

### *Tubes and Drains*

- **Foley catheter** – empties urine
- **Nasogastric tube (NG)** – empties the stomach
- **Chest tube** – drains excess fluid or air from the chest

Tubes and drains also can be used to give medication. Tubes also are called catheters. Please do not give an ICU patient any food or drink without asking.

### *Alarms*

Alarms may ring for many different reasons. An alarm does not always mean there is a problem with the patient. Please do not touch the equipment or alarms.

### *IV*

"IV" stands for intravenous (into the vein). A patient may have one or many IVs. An IV pump helps give medicines and fluids.

## Safety

Siderails and restraints may be needed to help keep the patient safe in the ICU. Please do not lower the rails or untie or remove the restraints without asking.

## Special Help

Heart pumps, pacemakers, dialysis and surgery are some of the treatments patients may need in the ICU. This special help, if needed, will be discussed with you.

## Take care of yourself...your health is important.

The patient's illness and time in the ICU can have an effect on you, too. If you look tired and upset, the patient will worry about you. Please take care of yourself.

- Rest and relax. Take time to eat, relax and sleep. Remember to take your medicine.
- Ask for help. Family and friends can help in many different ways. Don't be afraid to accept or ask for help. A hospital chaplain may be a source of support.
- Communicate. The designated family spokesperson should share information with the rest of the family. Talk together about your concerns and feelings.
- Ask questions. It helps to write down any questions, so you do not forget. The clinical nurse manager can assist with any special concerns.

Adapted with permission of Oakwood Healthcare System Foundation, Dearborn, Michigan.

## Intensive Care Area Phone Numbers

**Cardiothoracic Intensive Care Unit (CTICU), Rooms, 701-711: 312-926-5123**

**Surgical Intensive Care Unit (SICU), Rooms 712-723: 312-926-5186**

**Coronary Care Unit (CCU), Rooms 802-813: 312-926-5172**

**Cardiac Recovery Unit, Rooms 8-514, 8-516, 8-518, 8-517, 8-519, 8-547, 8-545, and 8-543: 312-926-9640**

**Cardiac Surveillance Unit, Rooms 814-824: 312-926-2352**

**Medical Intensive Care Unit (MICU), Rooms 902-924: 312-926-5140 and 312-926-5141**

**Neuro/Spine Surveillance Unit, Rooms 932-942: 312-926-6169**

**Neuro/Spine Intensive Care Unit, Rooms 943-954: 312-926-5169**

## Cafeterias

In both the Feinberg Pavilion and in the Prentice Women's Hospital you will find a cafeteria. Other food also is available within the buildings. There also are a number of other restaurants conveniently close to the Northwestern Memorial campus. Ask your nurse if you need assistance.

## Parking

Parking is available for patients and visitors in the garage at 222 E. Huron, across from the Feinberg and Galter pavilions. For discounted rates, please bring your parking ticket with you. Tickets can be validated at the Customer Services Desks on the 1st and 2nd floor of the Feinberg and Galter pavilions; 1st floor of Prentice (including the Prentice 24 hour desk near the Superior entrance).

## Health Information Resources

For more information, visit one of Northwestern Memorial Hospital's Health Learning Centers. These state-of-the-art health libraries are located on the third floor of the Galter Pavilion and on the first floor of the Prentice Women's Hospital. Health information professionals are available to help you find the information you need and provide you with personalized support at no charge. You may contact the Health Learning Centers by calling 312-926-LINK (5465) or by sending an e-mail to [hlc@nmh.org](mailto:hlc@nmh.org).

For additional information about Northwestern Memorial Hospital, please visit our Web site at [www.nmh.org](http://www.nmh.org).

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For more information about Northwestern Memorial Hospital, please visit [www.nmh.org](http://www.nmh.org).

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